

There's so much information out there on how to lose weight that it's easy to go into information overload. Here, **Sally Symonds**, author of *50 Steps to Lose 50kg ... And Keep It Off*, shares her secrets for healthy eating.

Tip one

EAT MORE, NOT LESS

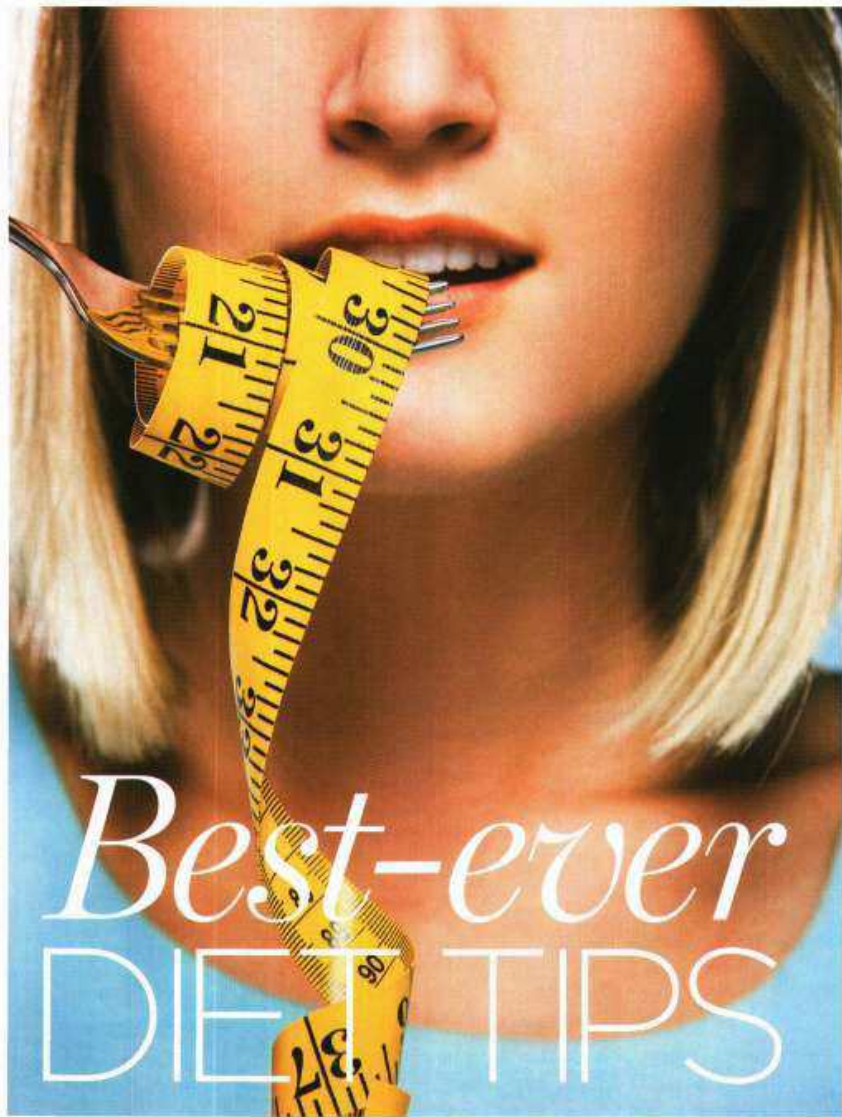
Weight loss doesn't necessarily mean eating less, but it does mean eating better. Feeling hungry is one of the surest ways to make you give up on healthy eating. So consider this: there are 5649kJ (1345 calories) in an average 250g block of milk chocolate. That's the equivalent of eating two slices of multigrain bread, two large boiled eggs, one carton of low-fat yogurt, one medium banana, four sushi rolls, half a cup of blueberries, 25 almonds, one lean chicken breast, half a cup of mashed sweet potato, half a cup of broccoli, half a cup of carrots, one scoop of regular ice-cream and two olives! Clearly you can eat quite a lot, if you eat the right things.

Tip two

CONSIDER YOUR CARBS

Low-GI carbohydrates keep you fuller for longer. Serve yourself high-GI carbs (ones that are high in sugar) and you are actually double dipping in terms of the negative effects. Not only are you indulging in something that won't sustain you for long when you eat it, but you'll actually be much more likely to crave something else that's not so good for you in the not-so-distant future.

✨ **DON'T SKIP MEALS ESPECIALLY BREAKFAST - IT SLOWS YOUR METABOLISM AND MAKES YOU MUCH MORE LIKELY TO OVERINDULGE AT THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY.**



Tip three

YOUR BODY HAS NEEDS

All foods give us energy, but each individual food group also aids with specific functions in the body unique to that food group. If you severely restrict, or even totally eliminate, consumption of any of the major food groups, you will soon notice the results – and they won't just be on your waistline. From not being able to think clearly (no carbs), or not being able to produce hormones

or absorb certain vitamins (no fat), to not being able to repair and produce new cells (no protein), your body will soon tell you that something is wrong. Furthermore, restrictive eating patterns of any kind are unlikely to be ones that you will be able to sustain. You might lose weight while you adhere to them, but as soon as you begin to eat normally again, your body will automatically grab and hold onto anything it has been missing out on – and you will quickly regain all the weight you have lost. ➤



Tip four

WATER - JUST DRINK IT

You can survive a couple of weeks without food, but only a couple of days without water. Increasing your water intake is one of the easiest and cheapest ways to assist your body to metabolise fat more efficiently while increasing your feeling of fullness at the same time. What are you waiting for?

Tip five

KEEP A FOOD DIARY

For some people, the key to successful weight loss is 50 per cent diet and 50 per cent exercise. For others, the ratio is much closer to 80:20. Many overweight people claim to "eat well" but are still overweight. Try keeping a food diary for a while. You might be surprised at just how many extra kilojoules you consume each day.

Tip six

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

A five-minute walk or one biscuit instead of three does make a difference. You need to take a lot of little steps, not one giant leap, to climb a mountain. While the number of kilojoules saved (or burnt) by your individual actions may be slight, the psychological boost of knowing that you're getting closer to where you want to be and are still able to maintain a normal life while you're doing it, is huge.

Tip seven

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

It's important to monitor yourself in a way that suits your psychological makeup. For example, some people need to weigh themselves every day to stay motivated. For others, this method can be extremely disheartening. So whether you use a tape measure or an old pair of jeans, work out what works best for you and stick with that.



PORTION CONTROL

WHEN THE CHOICE IS WASTE OR WAIST, ASK YOURSELF, "AM I A RUBBISH BIN?" IF THE ANSWER IS "NO", DON'T WORRY ABOUT NOT FINISHING EVERYTHING ON YOUR PLATE.

Tip eight

FACT VERSUS FICTION

Food labels are what you think you're getting on a first date. Nutrition panels are what you know you're stuck with 20 years later! Learning how to read nutrition panels takes time, but it's short-term pain for long-term gain. Forget the front of the packet – that's just marketing. Low-fat often means that it's full of sugar (and vice-versa). Nutrition panels are facts. Learn to understand them, so that when you read them, you'll know what to look for.

Tip nine

LOSE FAT FAST = GET RICH QUICK

There's a very good reason why some things sound too good to be true – they are. Beware of diets that promise you'll lose weight fast. The first thing you lose will be water, not fat.

Tip ten

DON'T BE A REPEAT OFFENDER

Around 95 per cent of people who diet regain all the weight they have lost – and more – within two years. Most people then go back and try to lose weight again using the same method because they think it worked! Clearly it didn't work or they wouldn't be overweight again.

Tip eleven

REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT THE "BIGGEST LOSER"

Unless the only thing you have to do in your life is lose weight, you won't have time to exercise for eight hours a day and you won't lose weight as quickly either. If you've been overweight for 10 years, you're not going to lose it in 10 days! Successful weight loss is not about losing fat fast; it's about losing fat forever. Does it matter how long it takes you to lose the weight if, once you lose it, you never have to worry about your weight again?

Tip twelve

MAKE HEALTHY LIVING A PRIORITY

A healthier, happier more energetic you not only improves the quality of your own life, but also enhances the positive impacts that you have in the lives of others around you. Moreover, a healthier life usually means a longer life. Your kids may not thank you when they aren't orphaned at 15, but they'll certainly miss you when you're gone. Let it be later, rather than sooner.